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ACTION DSE-00

INFO	LOG-00	ADS-00	AID-00	INR-05	SS-00	EB-05	DODE-00
	NSCE-00	ARA-00	NSAE-00	COME-00	SSO-00	L-02	AMAD-01
	TRSE-00	PM-05	PA-02	CCO-00	INRE-00	CA-02	FAA-00
	USSS-00	USIE-00	JUSE-00	FBIE-00	OC-02	FAIM-01	DS-01
	SCT-02	/028 W					

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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1812
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PN
INFO AMEMBASSY PANAMA
CIA WASHDC
USOFFICE ATO MIAMI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 14342

TERREP

PANAMA FOR ADS

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: ASEC, PTER, EPET, CO
SUBJECT: MORE ON SEPTEMBER 26 PIPELINE, HELICOPTER
BOMBINGS

REF: BOGOTA 14208 *(N)*

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT

2. SUMMARY: DURING THE LAST SEVERAL DAYS, ECOPETROL,
COLOMBIA'S STATE OWNED OIL COMPANY, HAS PUBLICIZED THE
FULL EXTENT OF THE DAMAGES CAUSED IN THE SEPTEMBER 26
ATTACK ON THE CANO LIMON - RIO ZULIA - COVENAS PIPELINE
AND THE CHEVRON INSTALLATIONS LOCATED AT THE ATTACK
SITE. ECOPETROL'S INTENT SEEMS TO BE TO EDUCATE THE
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GUERRILLAS AND THE PUBLIC THAT ATTACKS ON THE PIPELINE,
RATHER THAN HARMING THE MULTINATIONALS, ACTUALLY HURT
ECOPETROL AND THE DOMESTIC ECONOMY. ACCORDING TO

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: OSCAR J. OLSON
DATE/CASE ID: 24 OCT 2002 200201334

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ECOPETROL, DAMAGE TO THE LINE IS MORE EXTENSIVE THAN
ORIGINALLY THOUGHT. END SUMMARY.

3. THE SEPTEMBER 26 GUERRILLA ATTACK ON THE CANO
LIMON-RIO ZULIA-COVENA PIPELINE OCCURRED IN ASERRIO IN
THE NORTH SANTANDER REGION, ABOUT 75 MILES FROM ZULIA
(PIPELINE KILOMETER 421) -- ROUGHLY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE
LINE. THE EXPLOSION DESTROYED 2 METERS OF THE 24 INCH
PIPELINE AND RESULTED IN AN OIL SPILL OF BETWEEN 15 AND
20 THOUSAND BARRELS, SOME OF WHICH FLOWED INTO THE
CATATUMBO RIVER CAUSING SERIOUS ECOLOGICAL DAMAGE. (THE
RUPTURE OF THE PIPE CLOSED EMERGENCY VALVES PREVENTING
AN EVEN LARGER SPILL.) THE VALUE OF THE SPILLED OIL,
ALL OF WHICH WAS DESTINED FOR EXPORT, IS ESTIMATED AT
200 TO 300 THOUSAND DOLLARS. LINE REPAIR IS EXPECTED TO
BE COMPLETED OCTOBER 8. THE REPAIR COST IS ROUGHLY US
800,000 DOLLARS, BRINGING TOTAL REPAIR COST DUE TO
GUERRILLA VIOLENCE TO ROUGHLY US 10 MILLION. THE GOC
HAD AUTHORIZED ECOPETROL/OCCIDENTAL TO PUMP 170,000 BPD
DURING SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER THROUGH THE PIPELINE TO
MAKE UP FOR EARLIER PRODUCTION LOSSES.

4. THE ATTACK ON THE CHEVRON RIO ZULIA FIELD
INSTALLATIONS (LOCATED WHERE THE PIPELINE WAS BOMBED)
HAS RESULTED IN THE CLOSING OF THE FIELD AND THE LOSS OF
ABOUT 2,000 BPD OF PRODUCTION OF PARAFFINIC CRUDE.
COLOMBIA WILL BE FORCED TO IMPORT ROUGHLY 400 TONS OF
PARAFFIN AND 5 THOUSAND BARRELS OF LUBRICANT BASES TO
MAINTAIN PRODUCTION IN THE BARRANCABERMEJA PETROCHEMICAL
PLANTS. THE COST OF THE IMPORTS IS ESTIMATED TO BE AT
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LEAST US 5 MILLION DOLLARS ANNUALLY. THE RIO ZULIA
CRUDE WAS USED IN THE PRODUCTION OF HIGH QUALITY
LUBRICANTS FOR THE AUTOMOTIVE AND OTHER INDUSTRIES.

5. THE THEFT AND DESTRUCTION OF THE HELICOPTERS
REPORTED REFTTEL WAS PERPETRATED BY 7 NATIONAL LIBERATION
ARMY (ELN) GUERRILLAS. THE HELICOPTERS WERE ON CONTRACT
TO WESTERN GEOPHYSICAL FROM AEROEXPRESO BOGOTA, A
COLOMBIAN FIRM. THE HELICOPTER TAIL NUMBERS WERE HK
26-80 AND HK 30-09. INTERESTINGLY, THE CAPTAIN OF HK
26-80 WAS THE PILOT OF THE HELICOPTER THAT WAS
TRANSPORTING HANS FISCHBORN WHEN HE WAS ABDUCTED LAST
MARCH. FISCHBORN WAS CONSEQUENTLY MURDERED BY THE ELN.

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THE CONNECTION IS BEING INVESTIGATED. LOSSES ARE ESTIMATED AT ROUGHLY 200 MILLION PESOS (ONE MILLION DOLLARS).

6. COMMENT: ECOPETROL'S BELATED EFFORTS TO MAKE PUBLIC THE COST OF THE ATTACKS TO THE COLOMBIAN ECONOMY IS USEFUL. THE GUERRILLAS MAY CALCULATE THEY ARE HARMING THE MULTINATIONALS WHEN THEY ATTACK THE PIPELINE, WHEN IN FACT THE MAJORITY OF THE COST OF REPAIR ACCRUES TO ECOPETROL. IN THIS CASE ECOPETROL IS ALSO HIGHLIGHTING THE ECOLOGICAL DAMAGE DONE BY THE ATTACK AGAIN TO BRING PUBLIC PRESSURE TO BEAR ON THE GUERRILLAS TO CEASE THE ATTACKS. IT APPEARS UNLIKELY, HOWEVER, THAT THIS STRATEGY WILL KEEP THE GUERRILLAS FROM ATTACKING WHAT IS ESSENTIALLY A SOFT TARGET. ANOTHER QUESTION IS WHETHER THE REALIZATION OF COSTS SUCH ATTACKS ENTAIL WILL MOVE THE GOC TO DEVOTE MORE RESOURCES TO PROTECTING THE LINE.
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